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EPC 71 (7-29-04)

ALL PENDING CLAIMS SHOWING AMENDMENTS

What is claimed is:

1. (Previously Amended and Newly Amended) In a computer system including a clearinghouse component, a nonprofit component having one or more nonprofits, a supporter component having one or more supporters, and a merchant component having one or more merchants, with the clearinghouse component connecting the other three components via a variety of entry terminals, ~~said computer system and said components having programs encoded on computer readable media including codes that when executed perform steps in a method,~~ the clearinghouse component having recorded therein an individual identification number (ID) for each of the one or more supporters and identifications of each of said one or more nonprofits and said one or more merchants, ~~the steps in the~~ a computerized method comprising:

_____ in said computer system, at an entry terminal of a merchant in a transaction, entering an ID and an amount spent by a supporter at the merchant;

_____ in said computer system, having the entry terminal of the merchant record, in computer code, the ID as well as the amount of dollars spent in the transaction;

~~in computer code, uploading~~ uploading the ID and the amount entered to a central clearinghouse, wherein a program in said clearinghouse component has recorded therein,

in computer code, a determination by said merchant of the amount of rebate available from said merchant;

~~in computer code, calculating~~ calculating in the central clearinghouse rebates determined by said merchant on the basis of purchases of the supporter from said merchant and to be paid by the merchant to the nonprofit; and

~~in computer code, deducting~~ from the purchases of the supporter from said merchant the calculated rebates determined by the merchant and ~~in computer code~~ forwarding to an account of said nonprofit the calculated and deducted rebates to be paid by the merchant to said nonprofit.

2. (Previously Amended and Newly Amended) ~~In a computer system having programs encoded on computer readable media including codes that when executed perform steps,~~ a A computerized method of accumulating credits for one or more organizations, comprising:

~~in the computer system, recording, on computer readable media including codes that when executed perform steps,~~ recording assigned identifications to one or more supporters, one or more merchants, and one or more organizations affiliated with the supporters and merchants during transactions between one or more supporters and one or more merchants;

~~in the computer system, associating, on computer readable media including codes that~~
~~when executed perform steps,~~associating the identification of a supporter and a merchant
with an affiliated organization in response to each transaction between a merchant and a
supporter;

~~in the computer system, on computer readable media including codes that when~~
~~executed perform steps,~~deducting and recording rebates determined by the merchant and
to be paid by the merchant to the affiliated organization, from a purchase of the supporter
from said merchant in a transaction; and

crediting, in computer code, transmitting to the organizations a rebate, to an
account of the organization a rebate deducted from purchases of the supporter from said
merchant in said transaction between said supporter and the merchant, and to be given to
the ~~organization~~organization selected by a supporter from among the one or more
organizations .

3.~~(Previously Added)~~ A method as in claim 2, wherein the steps of recording
assigned identification are performed at a remote terminal of a merchant; and

the steps of associating, deducting, and transmitting are performed in a central
clearinghouse.

4.(Previously Amended) A method as in claim 2, wherein the organization is a nonprofit body, the one or more supporters shop at the one or more merchants, and the one or more merchants agree to pay rebates to the nonprofit body.

5.(Previously Amended) A method as in claim 2, further comprising assigning identifications to each of said one or more supporters, one or more merchants, and one or more organizations.

6.(Previously Amended and Newly Amended) A method as in claim 3, wherein each the step of recording includes uploading each transaction to said clearinghouse and the step of ~~transmitting~~crediting includes downloading accumulated rebates to said remote terminals at said one or more merchants.

7. (Previously Amended and Newly Amended) A computerized method~~A computer program product encoded on a computer readable medium residing in a computer of a central clearinghouse, comprising a code that when executed on the computer perform the steps of:~~

~~assigning, in a code to be executed on the computer, to one or more organizations and one or more affiliated supporters and one or more merchants individual identifications;~~

maintaining, in a system and in computer code, individual identifications assigned to one or more organizations and individual identifications assigned to one or more affiliated supporters and individual identifications assigned to one or more merchants;

~~code to be executed on the computer,~~ in the system and in computer code,
maintaining a schedule of rebates determined by each of the one or more the merchants due to each of the one or more organizations from each of the merchants;

~~collecting, in a code to be executed on the computer,~~ from the merchant, ~~during~~ in computer code, in response to a transaction between a supporter and a merchant, the identifications of the supporter and the merchant;

calculating, in a ~~code to be executed on the computer,~~ computer code, the rebates due from the merchant to the organization; and

~~transmitting, in a code to be executed on the computer,~~ in computer code, crediting to the one or more organizations, the amount of rebates determined by the one or more merchants and due the one or more organizations from each of the merchants.

8-(Previously Amended and Newly Amended) ~~A method utilizing programs encoded on computer readable media including codes that when executed perform steps, said method~~ 8. A computerized method, comprising:

~~in computer code, entering in a clearinghouse computer network identification of merchants, identification of supporters associated with the merchants, and identification of nonprofit organizations associated with the supporters and the merchants;~~

in computer code, maintaining in a clearinghouse computer network identification of merchants, identification of supporters associated with the merchants, and identification of nonprofit organizations associated with the supporters and the merchants;

~~entering into~~ in computer code, maintaining in said clearinghouse computer network a rebate calculation determined by said merchants on the basis of transactions with said supporters, for payment of rebates by the merchants to said nonprofit organizations; and

in computer code, having payments credited, on the basis of said transactions and said rebate calculations determined by said merchants, from said merchants to said nonprofit organizations.

9.(Previously Amended and Newly Amended) A method as in claim 8, wherein said clearinghouse computer network includes remote terminals of the merchants, and the step of maintaining identification of supporters includes enrolling of supporters associated with the merchants and is performed at the remote terminals of the merchants; and

said clearinghouse computer network includes a central clearinghouse, and the steps of entering a rebate calculation determined by said merchants on the basis of transactions with said supporters, for payment of rebates by the merchants to said nonprofit organizations, is performed in a central clearinghouse.

10.(Previously Amended and Newly Amended) A method as in claim 9, wherein the nonprofit organization is a nonprofit body, the supporters shop at the merchants, and the merchants agree to pay rebates to the nonprofit body.

11.(Previously Amended and Newly Amended) A method as in claim 9, wherein the step of having payments credited includes uploading each transaction to said clearinghouse and downloading accumulated payments credited to said remote terminals at said nonprofit organizations.

12.(Previously Added) A method as in claim 8, wherein said clearinghouse computer network includes remote terminals of the nonprofit organizations, and the step of entering identification of supporters includes enrolling supporters associated with the nonprofit organizations and is performed at remote terminals of the nonprofit organizations; and

information concerning enrolling supporters is uploaded by said remote terminals of the nonprofit organizations to a database in said central clearinghouse computer network.

13. (Previously Added and Newly Amended) A method as in claim 12, wherein said clearinghouse computer network includes a central clearinghouse, said transactions define shopping activity, and said payments represent calculated rebates, and said clearinghouse downloads reports on the shopping activity and calculated rebates due said nonprofit organizations to remote terminals operated by the nonprofit organizations.

14. (Previously Added and Newly Amended) A method as in claim 8, wherein said clearinghouse computer network includes remote terminals operated by said supporters and said step of maintaining ~~entering~~ identifications of supporters includes supporters using said remote terminals to ~~enroll~~ for enrolling themselves and select a nonprofit organization that will receive payments based on the calculated rebates; and

information concerning said enrolling is uploaded by said remote terminals to a database in said central clearinghouse computer.

15. (Previously Added and Newly Amended) A method as in claim 14, wherein said clearinghouse computer network includes a central clearinghouse that downloads reports on the transactions in the form of shopping activity and calculated rebates due said nonprofit organizations to remote terminals operated by said supporters .

16. (Previously Added and Newly Amended) A method as in claim 8, wherein said clearinghouse computer network includes remote terminals of the nonprofit, and the step of maintaining identifications of enrolling supporters associated with the nonprofits includes recording the identifications and is performed at the remote terminals of the nonprofit organizations; and

said recording includes enrollment information and is uploaded by said nonprofit remote terminals to a database in said central clearinghouse computer.

17. (Previously Amended) A method as in claim 12, wherein said clearinghouse computer network includes a central clearinghouse that downloads reports on the shopping activity and calculated rebates due said nonprofits to remote terminals operated by nonprofit organizations.

18. (Previously Added and Newly Amended) A method as in claim 8, wherein said clearinghouse computer network includes remote terminals operated by supporters for enrolling themselves and select a nonprofit organization that will receive the calculated rebates; and

said ~~enrollment~~ information concerning enrolling is uploaded by said remote terminals to a database in said central clearinghouse computer.

19. (Previously Added) A method as in claim 14, wherein said clearinghouse computer network includes a central clearinghouse that downloads reports on the shopping activity and calculated rebate due said nonprofits to remote terminals operated by said supporters.

20. (Previously Added) A method as in claim 8, wherein said process of maintaining ~~entering~~ the identification of the merchants, identification of the supporters, and identification of the nonprofit organizations includes enrolling of the merchants, the supporters, and of the nonprofit organizations, as well as recognizing the merchants, the supporters, and the nonprofit organizations during said transactions.

21. (Previously Added and Newly Amended) A method as in claim 15, wherein said clearinghouse computer network includes remote terminals at the nonprofit organizations, and the enrolling of supporters associated with the nonprofit organizations is performed at the remote terminals of the nonprofit organizations; and

said clearinghouse computer network includes a central clearinghouse, and the steps of ~~entering~~ crediting a rebate calculation determined by said merchants on the basis of transactions with said supporters, for payment of rebates by the merchants to said nonprofit organizations, is performed in the central clearinghouse.

22. (Previously Added and Newly Amended) A method as in claim 15, wherein said clearinghouse computer network includes remote terminals ~~of the supporters, and~~ at the nonprofit organizations, and the maintaining identifications include enrolling of ~~nonprofit organizations~~ supporters and the merchants and are performed at the remote terminals of the ~~supporters;~~ nonprofit organizations; and

said clearinghouse computer network includes a central clearinghouse, and the steps of ~~entering~~ crediting a rebate calculation determined by said merchants on the basis of transactions with said supporters, for payment of rebates by the merchants to said nonprofit organizations, are performed in the central clearinghouse.

23. (Previously Added and Newly Amended) A method as in claim 15, wherein said clearinghouse computer network includes remote terminals ~~at~~ of the supporters, and the steps of maintaining include enrolling of nonprofit organizations ~~associated with the~~ merchants and are performed at the remote terminals of the supporters; and

said clearinghouse computer network includes a central clearinghouse, and the steps of ~~entering~~ crediting a rebate calculation determined by said merchants on the basis of transactions with said supporters, for payment of rebates by the merchants to said nonprofit organizations, are performed in the central clearinghouse.

24. (Previously Added and Newly Amended) A method as in claim 15, wherein said clearinghouse computer network includes remote terminals at the supporters, and the

steps of maintaining include enrolling of nonprofit organizations associated with the merchants and are performed at the remote terminals of the supporters; and

said clearinghouse computer network includes a central clearinghouse, and the steps of entering a rebate calculation determined by said merchants on the basis of transactions with said supporters, for payment of rebates by the merchants to said nonprofit organizations, are performed in the central clearinghouse.

25. (Previously Added and Newly Amended) A method as in claim 15, wherein said clearinghouse computer network includes a central clearinghouse, and the steps of maintaining include enrolling of supporters associated with the nonprofit organizations and are performed at the central clearinghouse; and

the steps of crediting a rebate calculation determined by said merchants on the basis of transactions with said supporters, for payment of rebates by the merchants to said nonprofit organizations, are performed in the central clearinghouse.

26. (Previously Added and Newly Amended) A method as in claim 15, wherein said clearinghouse computer network includes a central clearinghouse, and the steps of maintaining include enrolling of merchants associated with the supporters and are performed at the central clearinghouse; and

the steps of ~~entering~~crediting a rebate calculation determined by said merchants on the basis of transactions with said supporters, for payment of rebates by the merchants to said nonprofit organizations, are performed in the central clearinghouse.

27.(Previously Added and Newly Amended) A method as in claim 15, wherein said clearinghouse computer network includes a central clearinghouse, and the steps of maintaining include enrolling of supporters associated with the merchants and nonprofit organizations are performed at the central clearinghouse; and

said clearinghouse computer network includes a central clearinghouse, and the steps of ~~entering~~crediting a rebate calculation determined by said merchants on the basis of transactions with said supporters, for payment of rebates by the merchants to said nonprofit organizations, are performed in the central clearinghouse.

28. (Previously Added and Newly Amended) A method as in claim 1, wherein ~~the program in~~ said clearinghouse component having recorded therein in computer code the determination of said merchant of the amount of rebate available from said merchant, further including the determination of said merchant of the nonprofits to receive rebates from said merchant, the supporters who qualify for rebates by said merchant, and the required activity needed to qualify for a rebate; and the step of calculating in the central clearinghouse rebates determined by said merchant on the basis of purchases of the supporter from said merchant and to be paid by the merchant to the nonprofit includes

agreeing on the supporters who qualify for rebates by said merchant, and the required activity needed to qualify for a rebate.

29. (Previously Added) A method as in claim 1, wherein said nonprofits enroll supporters, and enroll with one or more merchants where their supporters will shop.

30.(Previously Added and Newly Amended)- A method as in claim 1, further comprising said nonprofits encoding and ~~entering~~crediting data in said clearing house component to enroll supporters and enroll with one or more merchants where their supporters will shop.

31. (Previously Added and Newly Amended) In a computer system including a clearinghouse component, an organization component having one or more organizations affiliated with one or more supporters, a supporter component having one or more supporters affiliated with one or more of the organizations, and a merchant component having one or more merchants, with the clearinghouse component and the merchant component being connected via one or more entry terminals, said computer system and said components ~~having programs encoded on computer readable media including codes that when executed perform steps in a method,~~ the clearinghouse component having recorded therein in computer code an individual identification number~~(ID)~~ for each of the one or more supporters and identifications of each of said one or more organizations and said one or more merchants, the clearinghouse component also having recorded therein in computer code information as to the selected relationship of each of said one or more

supporters and said one or more organizations as well as said one or more merchants with each other, ~~the steps in the~~ method comprising:

in said computer system, at an entry terminal of a merchant in a transaction, entering an ID and an amount spent by a supporter at the merchant in computer code;

in computer code, uploading the entered ID and the entered amount to the central clearinghouse, ~~wherein a program in~~ said clearinghouse component has recorded therein, in computer code, a determination by said merchant of the amount of rebate available from said merchant;

in computer code, calculating in the clearinghouse component a rebate determined by said merchant on the basis of the transaction to be paid by the merchant to the organization component; and

in computer code, deducting from the amount entered in the transaction from said merchant the calculated rebates determined by the merchant and in computer code forwarding to said organization component the calculated and deducted rebates to be paid by the merchant to said organization.

32. (Previously Added) A method as in claim 31, wherein the rebate to be paid by the merchant to the organization is calculated at the clearinghouse in computer code on the basis of the amount entered in the transaction.

33.(Previously Added) A method as in claim 32, wherein the calculated rebate to be paid by the merchant is also calculated at the clearinghouse in computer code on the basis of amounts in prior transactions by the consumer at the merchant.

34.(Previously Added) A method as in claim 33, wherein the rebate to be paid by the merchant is also calculated on the basis of arrangement with the organization component.

35.(Previously Added) A method as in claim 31, wherein the organization component is a nonprofit component having a plurality of nonprofits.

36.(Previously Added) A method as in claim 31, wherein said organization component includes one or more organizations which are nonprofits.

37.(Previously Added) A method as in claim 31, wherein the organization component includes a nonprofit body, the one or more supporters shop at the one or more merchants, and the one or more merchants agree to pay rebates to the nonprofit body.

38.(Previously Added) A method as in claim 31, wherein the step of forwarding includes downloading, in code, data concerning accumulated rebates to the merchant.

39.(Previously Added) A method as in claim 31, wherein each transaction defines shopping activity, and said clearinghouse component downloads reports on shopping activity and the step of forwarding includes sending reports, in code, of rebates to the merchant.

40.(Previously Added) A method as in claim 31, wherein the step of uploading occurs on-line during the transaction.

41.(Previously Added) A method as in claim 31, wherein the step of uploading occurs on a batch basis at a time other than the transaction.

42.(Previously Added) A method as in claim 31, wherein the program in said clearinghouse component has recorded therein in computer code a determination of said merchant of the amount of rebate available from said merchant, further including the determination of said merchant of the organization to receive rebates from said merchant, the supporters who qualify for rebates from said merchant, and the required activity needed to qualify for a rebate; and

the step of calculating in the clearinghouse component rebates includes using the determination by said merchant on the basis of purchases of the supporter from said merchant and to be paid by the merchant to the nonprofit includes and on the supporters who qualify for rebates by said merchant, and the required activity needed to qualify for a rebate.

43.(Previously Added) A method as in claim 31, further comprising a step of enrolling and establishing a supporter ID using an entry terminal to select one or more organizations that will receive payments based on the calculated rebates; and

information concerning said enrolling step is uploaded, by said entry terminal used during the step enrolling to a database in said clearinghouse component.

44.(Previously Added) A method as in claim 42, wherein said clearinghouse component includes a central clearinghouse that downloads reports on the transaction in the form of shopping activity and calculated rebate due said nonprofit organization to a remote terminal operated by said supporter.

45.(Previously Added) A method as in claim 44, wherein the step of enrolling a supporter is performed at a remote terminal of an organization; and

information concerning enrolling is uploaded by a remote terminal of the organization to a database in the clearinghouse component.

46.(Previously Added) A method as in claim 44, wherein said clearinghouse component allows a supporter to enroll and select an organization that will receive the calculated rebates.

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